

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-07 TRSE-00 /062 W
----- 007600

R 231100Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7497

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT JA

SUBJ: LDP PARTY CONVENTION

SUMMARY: THE JANUARY 22 LDP PARTY CONVENTION WAS A ROUTINE AFFAIR. THE DELEGATES FORMALLY ELECTED MIKI TO A THREE-YEAR TERM AS PARTY PRESIDENT, AND DESPITE MIKI'S URGENT CALL FOR PARTY REFORM, DECIDED TO REFER REFORM AND ALL OTHER CONTROVERSIAL MATTERS TO STUDY COMMISSIONS. MAIN PREOCCUPATION OF THE DELEGATES WAS OBVIOUSLY THE NATION-WIDE LOCAL ELECTIONS IN APRIL. END SUMMARY.

1. THE LDP HELD ITS 30TH PARTY CONVENTION IN TOKYO ON JANUARY 22. ALTHOUGH COMING LESS THAN TWO MONTHS AFTER THE PARTY'S SEVEREST CRISIS IN ITS 20-YEAR HISTORY, THE MOOD AT THE CONVENTION WAS BUSINESS-AS-USUAL. TANAKA ABSENTED HIMSELF FROM THE SCENE, AND THE CONVENTION SPEAKERS TOOK PAINS TO AVOID MENTION OF HIS NAME OR DIRECT REFERENCE TO HIS PROBLEMS. THE 500 DELEGATES DULY RATIFIED MIKI'S ELECTION TO A THREE-YEAR TERM AS PARTY PRESIDENT, LISTENED TO HIS SPEECH, AND DECIDED NOT TO TAKE ANY ACTION ON CONTROVERSIAL MATTERS. THEY AGREED UNANIMOUSLY TO REFER TO PARTY STUDY COMMISSIONS SUCH ITEMS AS MIKI'S PARTY REFORM

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PROPOSALS, INCREASE IN PARTY DUES, LEGISLATION TO CONTROL

POLITICAL FUNDS AND ELECTORAL PRACTICES, AND REVISION OF THE ANTI-TRUST LAWS.

2. IN HIS KEYNOTE SPEECH, MIKI EXHORTED THE DELEGATES TO WORK URGENTLY TOWARD "RENEWAL" OF THE PARTY. AS IF TO SUGGEST WHAT MUST BE DONE TO CLEAN UP THE PARTY'S IMAGE, MIKI SAID THAT HE WAS DEEPLY MOVED BY THE ROLE OF THE US CONGRESS IN THE WATERGATE CASE. HE SAID THAT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, IN THE SPIRIT OF THE US FOUNDING FATHERS AND THE CONSTITUTION, "SAVED" DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT FOR AMERICA. HE THEN LISTED THE REFORM MEASURES REQUIRED TO "OVERHAUL" THE PARTY, AND THE SHIFT IN ECONOMIC POLICY AND THE MEASURES TO ATTAIN SOCIAL JUSTICE THAT NEED TO BE TACKLED AS URGENT TASKS BY THE GOVERNMENT PARTY.

3. THE MAIN PREOCCUPATION OF THE DELEGATES, JUDGING FROM AUDIENCE RESPONSE AT THE CONVENTION, WAS NOT PARTY REFORM OR NATIONAL ISSUES BUT THE NATION-WIDE LOCAL ELECTIONS IN APRIL. THE DELEGATES SHOWED SOME LIFE ONLY WHEN SPEAKERS MENTIONED THE ELECTIONS, E.G. SECRETARY GENERAL NAKASONE'S APPEAL TO THEM TO CONSIDER THE CONVENTION AS THE KICK-OFF RALLY FOR APRIL. THE HIGH POINT OF THE CONVENTION WAS THE ROUSING SPEECH GIVEN BY AN UNSCHEDULED SPEAKER, MASAKATA TOZAWA, THE RECENTLY NAMED LDP CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR OF KANAGAWA PREFECTURE.

4. COMMENT: THE MAIN POINT ABOUT THE CONVENTION WAS THAT IT WAS HUMDRUM. THERE WAS VERY LITTLE ENTHUSIASM SHOWN FOR MIKI. BUT BY THE SAME TOKEN, THERE WAS ALSO NO DESIRE TO BRING HIM TO ACCOUNT FOR NOT PRODUCING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION PROGRAM OR ANTI-TRUST LAW PROPOSALS THAT HE HAD CALLED FOR PUBLICLY BY CONVENTION TIME, OR TO FACE UP TO OTHER PENDING PROBLEMS. HAVING JUST GONE THROUGH THE TRAUMA--AND CATHARSIS--OF THE OUSTER OF TANAKA, THE PARTY COLLECTIVELY SEEMS STILL TO HAVE NO APPETITE FOR CONTROVERSY.
HODGSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TOKYO00950
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750025-0724
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750125/aaaaavua.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <16 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LDP PARTY CONVENTION SUMMARY: THE JANUARY 22 LDP PARTY CONVENTION WAS A ROUTINE
TAGS: PINT, JA, LDP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006